

**2020
2025**

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BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Matt Neville, Chair

Patricia Cuttell, Executive Director

On behalf of the Board, we are pleased to present a new Strategic Plan for the North End Business Association. Strategic plans are about creating a framework for directing future activities. They are not a detailed road map, but a commitment to key principles and objectives that provide guidance for making decisions.

NEBA is a unique Business Improvement District. It is geographically large and encompasses a number of residential neighbourhoods. So while our membership is made of businesses, service providers and commercial property owners, our actions and ambitions also need to relate to our north end neighbourhoods. We see this as an opportunity to do things better. Thanks to the original vision for NEBA, which emerged from the Gottingen Street Merchants Association, this inclusive community development lens has been baked into our DNA since day one.

But this approach is not without major challenges. The North End has faced extreme pressures related to real estate development, high costs of housing, and uncertainty and potential loss of key public and community spaces. While much of the commercial development along Gottingen and Agricola Streets has been on vacant lands, the issue of displacement and affordability throughout the area is real and needs real solutions.

For NEBA, this means doing what we can to continue to strengthen the relationships between businesses and

community while continuing our efforts around core marketing and events programming. This means that while fighting for tax reform for small businesses, we also support initiatives around inclusive employment and collaborative community projects. While we work to plant flowers and keep streets beautiful, we continue to advocate for long-term funding for our street outreach Navigator program to support the work of our many social services providers. In this way, NEBA believes that economic development and social justice are not mutually exclusive; we recognize that any business improvement or economic development work is political. This is why we continue to strive to support inclusive community and business growth, and development initiatives such as the Bus Stop Theatre and One North Ends NEST program. From the Board perspective, it also means having a Board more representative of the District itself.

While both government and big-business (banks and grocery) abandoned the District some time ago, small businesses and services providers remain. NEBA's focus continues to be on supporting small local businesses and organizations rooted in the District. And we strive to do this in a way that aligns and supports the community. The future for the north end is bright and this plan is meant to offer guidance for the organization to be better for everyone.

Matt and Patty

A. INTRODUCTION

This is a five-year strategic plan for the North End Business Association, hereby referred to as NEBA. NEBA was formed as an official Business Improvement District (BID) in 2011, and currently represents 250 commercial properties with over 350 businesses in the central-north area of the Halifax Peninsula. The BID encompasses one of the oldest districts in Halifax (Gottingen Street was named 1764!), as well as one of the fastest growing and changing neighbourhoods in the province. This paradox between old and new provides both opportunities and challenges in terms of economic development, community development, and supporting our membership. In order to serve the broad membership of the district in these dynamic times, NEBA needs to be empowered with a cohesive vision and a strategic framework that both dreams big, encompasses the complexities of the district, and provides the ability to be nimble and flexible. As NEBA prepares for its 10th anniversary in 2021, these next five years provide an opportunity for the association to mature, become more focused in its efforts, and continue to represent its membership with passion and relevance.

ABOUT THE PLAN

This Strategic Plan was created with input from NEBA members, the Board of Directors, staff, community stakeholders, and external partners. After being voted on by the NEBA Board of Directors, the plan was ratified and adopted on _____2020. This plan will be reviewed annually, and a new plan will be produced for 2026.

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

This plan outlines a framework of strategic commitments, strategic goals, objectives, and tactics which will be used to guide NEBA's annual Activity Plan and Budget, as well as help measure organizational progress and success over the next 5 years. This strategic plan captures the big picture ambitions of the association, and key goals and objectives for getting there.

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS: The Vision, Mission and Values define the desired long-term results of our efforts, and describe what we do and how we do it.

STRATEGIC GOALS: Our main areas of focus over the next five-years.

OBJECTIVES: Measurable steps to achieve goals.

TACTICS: Tools and action to pursue objectives in alignment with goals and strategic commitments.

WHAT WE HEARD

To create a plan that is relevant and reflective of the North End business community we conducted a survey with members, interviews with business owners and key stakeholders, and workshops with the Board of Directors. Receiving feedback from members, neighbours and

stakeholders helped inform us about the value and potential people saw in NEBA; what challenges they felt needed to be addressed; and what kind of future they saw for the district. All of this input helped shaped the vision, goals and objectives laid out in this strategic plan.

KEY ISSUES

- ▶ **Government Relations & Advocacy**
 - ▶ **Marketing & Branding**
 - ▶ **Streetscape Improvements**
 - ▶ **Business Development**
 - ▶ **Community Outreach & Capacity**
 - ▶ **Member Support Services**
- Member Survey 2017

PRIORITIES

- ▶ **Advocating for small business**
 - ▶ **Supporting inclusive business development**
 - ▶ **Encouraging good development**
 - ▶ **Supporting arts & culture**
 - ▶ **Growing festivals & events**
 - ▶ **Placemaking & public space improvements**
- AGM 2019 Quick Poll

GOALS

- ▶ **A Destination Community**
 - ▶ **A Thriving, Diverse, and Supportive Business Community**
 - ▶ **Positive and Engaging Business-Residential Relationship**
 - ▶ **Leaders in Economic and Community Development in HRM**
- Board Strategy Workshop, 2019

“Ensure safety on the streets through beautification, lighting, peace officers on foot, and community engagement.”
 - NEBA Membership Survey 2017

“More partnership between the historical community and business. A focus on diversity and the richness it brings to an area.”
 - NEBA Membership Survey 2017

“We have made substantial progress recently and must keep up the momentum.”
 - NEBA Membership Survey 2017

“Communication methods to allow for collaborations to form online - many small business owners cannot leave their shops to engage with others so facilitating online collaborations may be helpful or after hours opportunities.”
 - NEBA Membership Survey 2017

B. STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

VISION

A vision describes where the organization aspires to be upon achieving its mission. This statement reveals the "where" of an organization, but not just where the organization seeks to be. Rather, a vision statement describes where the organization wants a community, or the world, to be as a result of the organization's services.

“The North End is a diverse, iconic, and complete neighbourhood with a thriving small businesses scene that embraces being genuinely local.”

MISSION

A mission statement is an action-oriented vision statement, declaring “why” NEBA exists by saying what we aim to do in the next 5 years. It's the roadmap for the company's vision statement. It speaks to the core of the organizations business.

“The mission of the North End Business Association is to support a flourishing commercial district through leadership that inspires engagement, collaboration, and social responsibility.”

VALUES

Values are core principles that guide and direct the organization and its culture. In a values-led organization, the values create a moral compass for the organization and its employees. It guides decision-making and establishes a standard against which actions can be assessed.

CREATIVITY. NEBA embraces a creative approach to enhance and build upon the North End's unique, diverse, and artistic spirit.

COLLABORATION. NEBA seeks collaborative relationships with our members, external stakeholders and community partners to support positive growth in the North End.

INCLUSIVITY. NEBA believes in a business community that is reflective of the diversity in the community and embraces inclusion through education, support, and participation.

COMMUNITY. NEBA recognizes community as one of the North End's greatest assets, and is a supportive and respectful participant in that community.

IMPACT. NEBA is a leader that champions the needs of our district through strategic and sustainable decision making.

ACCOUNTABILITY. NEBA acts with integrity in every decision and action.

C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TACTICS



A DESTINATION DISTRICT

GOAL: The North End is a destination district, attracting both local Haligonians and visitors from afar.

1.1 OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of visitors to the North End.

TACTICS

- Develop a social media strategy that leverages opportunities and engages membership in showcasing what the North End has to offer.
- Develop a North End walking map for distribution to businesses, tourism centres, hotels, etc.
- Grow attendance to festival and events.
- Develop a Tourism Strategy that positions NEBA as a destination community.
- Develop programming and education to enhance the visitor experience.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

Advance initiatives that protect and strengthen the historical and cultural assets of the North End.

TACTICS

- Build alliances with community, cultural, and heritage organizations that have an impact in the North End.
- Strategically invest in projects and initiatives that promote the culture, diversity and heritage of the district.
- Continue to host and support events that are focused on music and the arts.

2 WELCOMING, ATTRACTIVE & LIVEABLE

GOAL: The North End is a welcoming and attractive place that is healthy, safe, and livable.

2.1 OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the “sense of place” in the district by enhancing the visual and physical experience on the streets.

TACTICS

- Develop and initiate a new 5 year investment strategy for streetscaping/beautification projects, including things like custom bike racks, murals, public art, pole banners, planters, cleaning.
- Work with HRM on improving street standards for accessibility, attractiveness, activation, cleanliness, environment, and pedestrian safety.
- Cultivate neighbourhood pride by engaging members in cleanliness, safety, and neighbourhood improvement initiatives.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

Support initiatives that increase the safety and well-being of the community.

TACTICS

- Secure stable funding and support for the Navigator program and initiative that provide support to the street-involved community.
- Work with local leaders, governments, police, service providers, and residents to develop a Community Safety Strategy for the Gottingen Street area based on best practice.
- Work with business owners and related stakeholders to develop local solutions to issues impacting the well-being of community, such as naloxone training or public washrooms.

2.3 OBJECTIVE

Advocate, promote and support principles of complete communities.

TACTICS

- Support a mix of business and service within the district.
- Support initiatives that contribute toward complete community principles, like a mix of housing, pedestrian first principles, cycling infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

3 ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP

GOAL: Members of the Association feel welcome, engaged, and supported.

3.1 OBJECTIVE

Keep businesses engaged, connected, and informed of relevant activities.

TACTICS

- Conduct an annual membership pulse check survey to gauge issues and engagement.
- Host regular member engagement events.
- Maintain communication with members via newsletters, targeted email bulletins, and social media.
- Establish advisory committees for the Agricola, Gottingen, and North of Almon areas to ensure representation of businesses and community.
- Report to members on progress and deliverables.

3.2 OBJECTIVE

Attract and support new businesses to the area.

TACTICS

- Promote the North End as place to do business.
- Provide data on the North End that can inform business decisions.
- Engage with local developers to identify and promote commercial opportunities.

3.3 OBJECTIVE

Support the growth and development of member businesses.

TACTICS

- Find and share opportunities for education and funding.
- Lend support to initiatives, such as the North End Women in Business group, that are geared toward helping businesses in the North End grow and thrive.
- Develop a members only resource page.

4 INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD

GOAL: The North End is an inclusive and cohesive neighbourhood.

4.1 OBJECTIVE

Recognize and celebrate the distinct neighbourhoods within the district.

TACTICS

- Develop a public art program that explores themes in the district.
- Develop a public history program that can share the history and stories of this district.
- Continue to build and strengthen the relationships between the business community and the residential communities.

4.2 OBJECTIVE

Continue to ensure NEBA initiatives provide opportunities for local the African Nova Scotian community.

TACTICS

- Continue to build and strengthen collaborative relationships with key community partner organizations including Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, New Horizons Baptist Church, iMOVE, and One North End.
- Ensure residential representation on NEBA board and relevant project committees.

4.3 OBJECTIVE

Support business development initiatives that create opportunities for greater diversity in the business community.

TACTICS

- Continue to work with NEST in support of POC opening businesses in the North End.
- Develop an incubator space to support local bricks and mortar micro business initiatives.
- Follow-up on the Diversity in the North End Workshop.



STRONG DISTRICT REPRESENTATION

GOAL: NEBA is a strong voice and advocate for solutions to issues impacting small businesses and the business district.

5.1 OBJECTIVE

Ensure the North End is represented in the Cogswell Redevelopment.

TACTICS

- Attend Cogswell meetings to strengthen connections between Cogswell and North End.
- Engage with HRM planners as Cogswell initiative moves forward to ensure North End position is understood.

5.2 OBJECTIVE

Work with HRM to advance and improve initiatives that impact the business community.

TACTICS

- Continue advocate on issues including Tax Reform, Red Tape Reduction, Parking Strategy, Gottingen Bus Lane, Community Safety, Centre Plan, Regional Plan, Bus Rapid Transit, Streetscaping, etc.

5.3 OBJECTIVE

Strengthen working relationships with key partners and stakeholders to advance goals of association.

TACTICS

- Present annual activity plan to community council. Request to meet regularly with city, elected representatives, and key stakeholders to discuss role of BID, areas of alignment, and working relationships.

5.4 OBJECTIVE

Continue to support professional development and industry organizations that champion BID's.

TACTICS

- Stay engaged with Downtown's Atlantic Canada (DAC) and International Downtown Association.
- Support professional development that builds skill and capacity within the organization.

D. IMPLEMENTATION

In order to realize the goals and objectives of this plan over the next 5 years, NEBA needs to be strategic in terms of funding allocation, staff resources, and organizational governance. While BIDs often work in fluid conditions and need to be responsive to external changes and drivers, internally the organization can be structured to ensure efforts are focused on the long-term goals and results. The implementation strategy is key providing the structure and the measurements to ensure the organization has impact in the areas it hopes to affect. This will be achieved by:

A. Driving operational and administrative efficiencies, and furthering a culture of transparency, accountability and accessibility.

TACTICS:

- ▶ Restructuring staffing resources to align with strategic objectives and deliverables.
- ▶ Annual performance reviews.

B. Being responsive to issues and opportunities as they arise.

TACTICS:

- ▶ Use task teams that include members, stakeholders, and the BOD to respond to take action when required.

C. Strive for excellence in governance and board development.

TACTICS:

- ▶ Annual review of Strategic Plan to track progress and deliverables.
- ▶ Aim to have a diverse board with representation from young entrepreneurs, women, people of colour, and other underrepresented groups.
- ▶ Conduct annual Board evaluations to identify board development and governance needs.

E. PRIORITIES

YEAR 1		
GOAL	TACTIC	MEASUREMENTS
1. DESTINATION DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a social media strategy that leverages opportunities and engages membership in showcasing what the North End has to offer. ▶ Develop a North End walking map for distribution to businesses, tourism centres, hotels, etc. ▶ Continue festivals & events, with plan to grow Gottingen Festival 	
2. WELCOMING, ATTRACTIVE & LIVEABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop and initiate a new 5 year investment strategy for streetscaping/beautification projects, including things like custom bike racks, murals, public art, pole banners, planters, cleaning. ▶ Work with HRM on improving street standards for accessibility, attractiveness, activation, cleanliness, environment, and pedestrian safety. ▶ Secure stable funding and support for the Navigator program and initiative that provide support to the street-involved community. 	
3. ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conduct an annual membership pulse check survey to gauge issues and engagement. ▶ Maintain communication with members via newsletters, targeted email bulletins, and social media. ▶ Establish advisory committees for the Agricola, Gottingen, and North of Almon areas to ensure representation of businesses and community. ▶ Provide data on the North End that can inform business decisions. ▶ Find and share opportunities for education and funding. ▶ Lend support to initiatives, such as the North End Women in Business group, that are geared toward helping businesses in the North End grow and thrive. ▶ Develop a members only resource page. 	

<p>4. INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review Community Committee goals and objectives to ensure NEBA continues to be proactive in engaging and supporting the local African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, and Newcomer communities. ▶ Continue to build and strengthen collaborative relationships with key community partner organizations including Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, New Horizons Baptist Church, iMOVE, One North End, MNFC, ISANS. ▶ Ensure residential representation on NEBA board and relevant project committees. ▶ Continue to work with NEST in support of POC opening businesses in the North End. ▶ Follow-up on the Diversity in the North End Workshop, assess progressive, develop new initiatives. 	
<p>5. STRONG DISTRICT REPRESENTATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Attend Cogswell meetings and workshops and advocate to strengthen connections between Cogswell and North End. ▶ Engage in dialogues with HRM planners as Cogswell initiative moves forward to ensure North End position is represented. ▶ Present annual activity plan to community council. ▶ Request to meet regularly with city, elected representatives, and key stakeholders (annually and on a need to basis) to discuss role of BID, areas of alignment, and working relationships. 	

YEAR 3		
GOAL	TACTIC	MEASUREMENTS
1. DESTINATION DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a Tourism Strategy that positions NEBA as a destination community. ▶ Build alliances with community, cultural, and heritage organizations that have an impact in the North End. ▶ Strategically invest in projects and initiatives that promote the culture, diversity and heritage of the district. 	
2. WELCOMING, ATTRACTIVE & LIVEABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review streetscaping investment strategy to assess needs and review deliverables. ▶ Cultivate neighbourhood pride by engaging members in cleanliness, safety, and neighbourhood improvement initiatives. ▶ Work with local leaders, governments, police, service providers, and residents to develop a Community Safety Strategy for the Gottingen Street area based on best practice. 	
3. ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Host regular member engagement events. ▶ Promote the North End as place to do business. ▶ Engage with local developers and property owners to identify and promote commercial opportunities. ▶ Lend support to initiatives, such as the North End Women in Business group, that are geared toward helping businesses in the North End grow and thrive. 	
4. INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a public art program that explores themes in the district. ▶ Develop a Public History program that can share the history and stories of this district. ▶ Develop an incubator space to support local bricks and mortar micro business initiatives. ▶ Review Community Committee plan to assess progress and determine new initiatives and areas of focus. 	
5. STRONG DISTRICT REPRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reassess priorities and areas of focus for advocacy. ▶ Continue relationship building with city and key stakeholders. 	

YEAR 5		
GOAL	TACTIC	MEASUREMENTS
1. DESTINATION DISTRICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop programming and education to enhance the visitor experience. ▶ Grow attendance to festival and events. 	
2. WELCOMING, ATTRACTIVE & LIVEABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review streetscaping investment strategy to assess needs and review deliverables. 	
3. ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Report to businesses on progress and deliverables made in support of North End Businesses Improvement District. 	
4. INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review Community Committee plan to assess progress and determine new initiatives and areas of focus. 	
5. STRONG DISTRICT REPRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reassess priorities and areas of focus for advocacy. ▶ Continue relationship building with city and key stakeholders. 	

Credits

Written by Patricia Cuttell, NEBA Executive Director

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With participation, input and review by the 2020 NEBA Board of Directors

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North End Business Association, 2020



